

## So That Ambushes Come As No Surprise

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### *Collaboration Seeks To Provide Game-based Education and Training for Hostile Encounters*

ALEXANDRIA, Va., July 18, 2005 – The National Guard Bureau's Distributive Training Technology Project (DTTP) demonstrates DARWARS Ambush!™ in conjunction with the Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) Initiative and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), aligning the Guard support with the Department of Defense's Training Transformation (T2) Initiative.

The most effective way to prepare for an ambush in hostile territory is to train for it. Just ask Captain John B. Nails. In his article entitled "A Company Commander's Thoughts on Iraq," which appeared in the February 2004 issue of *Armor Magazine*, Captain Nails wrote with certainty, "While in Iraq, your convoy will be ambushed." Fortunately, when his own convoy came under attack, Captain Nails and his troops were prepared. "There is a time," he wrote, "when training takes over your actions, and this was one of those times, which is why it is so important to train to standard all the time."

Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, also stresses the importance of training in today's environment. In praising members of the Kentucky Army National Guard who, in March 2005, responded to an ambush in Iraq and effectively turned the tables on the insurgents, Blum noted, "They performed magnificently. The soldiers did what the soldiers were supposed to do. Their training kicked in, and the leaders led. The results speak for themselves."

For Blum and other leaders, training has been a key factor in transforming the National Guard from a "strategic reserve" to a relevant operational force that supports emerging missions at home and abroad. Game-based education and training software such as DARWARS Ambush! is one tool to achieve the required level of training.

To support the military transformation and help prepare both National Guard soldiers and reservists for ambushes they might encounter overseas, NGB-J6/CIO's Joint IT Programs Division, in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Readiness and Training Policy and Programs, the Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) Initiative, the Training Transformation (T2) Initiative, and DARPA, are exploring the delivery of DARPA's "DARWARS Ambush!" training software package over National Guard distance-learning assets. According to Major General Alan L. Cowles, Director, Command, Control, Communications, and Computer Systems Division (J-6) of the National Guard Bureau, which operates DTTP, there are more than 300 multimedia DTTP classrooms throughout the 54 states and territories. "We provide a ready method of delivering this training to a significant number of soldiers across America," he noted.

"DARWARS Ambush!" is a DoD-owned, game-based training module designed to prepare soldiers for the types of ambushes they will likely experience during deployment. Rather than teaching specific driving or shooting skills, DARWARS Ambush! seeks to prepare soldiers mentally for hostile encounters through interactive role-play exercises.

Dr. Paul Mayberry, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Readiness), commended the work. "I applaud the efforts of the ADLI and its partners for developing a product that provides our warfighters with a mission rehearsal, near-real time, training capability. The National Guard is a key player on the ADL team, actively engaged in helping us transform the Department's training."

Added Dan Gardner, Director, ODUSD (Readiness & Training), "Our forces need adaptable, innovative training to defeat the 'thinking enemy' we face in Iraq and Afghanistan. This type of product will help us train to changing enemy tactics, put lessons learned into practice quickly, and better enable our junior and mid-grade leaders to make optimal decisions in stride."

The Army currently uses a variety of convoy trainers, but most are costly, cumbersome, and inflexible. Ambush!, on the other hand, can be used with standard desktop or laptop computers, in stand-alone or networked modes and can be modified quickly by trainers to match the ever-changing mission-rehearsal and battlefield environments.

Using technical resources housed in the Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) Co-Laboratory in

Alexandria, VA, NGB, in cooperation with DARPA and Ambush! software developer BBN Technologies, recently tested its compatibility with the hardware, firewalls, network, and security associated with NGB's Distributive Training Technology Project (DTTP) classrooms. This demonstration supports the type of experimentation outlined in ADL's recently released report on Massive Multiplayer Online Gaming: A Research Framework for Military Training and Education. "ADL encourages collaborative efforts and partnerships to bring about changes in training," said Dr. Robert Wisher, Director of the ADL Initiative. "The multiple parties involved with AMBUSH! offer a great example of the effectiveness gained from leveraging partnerships."

The tests were extremely successful, and the partners, in cooperation with the Texas Army National Guard, are now looking to expand their efforts by piloting the software to help train soldiers being deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. According to Colonel Patrick Hamilton, G3, Texas National Guard, "This software fills a gap in our simulation training package. We have good individual training simulations as well as staff simulations, but what we need is a good small-unit tactical simulator that units can use at home stations as well as at our training centers. Ambush fills the bill!"

The ADL Initiative, supported by the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), is a collaborative effort among government, industry and academia to establish a distributed learning environment that facilitates the interoperability of education and training content on a global scale.

DTTP is a state-of-the-art communications and learning-delivery system designed to support the Guard's traditional and expanding operations at home and abroad. There are more than 300 specially designed multimedia classrooms throughout the 50 states, three territories, and the District of Columbia, supporting such varied activities as military training; anti-terrorism training; first-responder instruction; emergency operations support; and scientific-education programming. Visit the Web site at <http://www.dttp.ngb.army.mil/>.